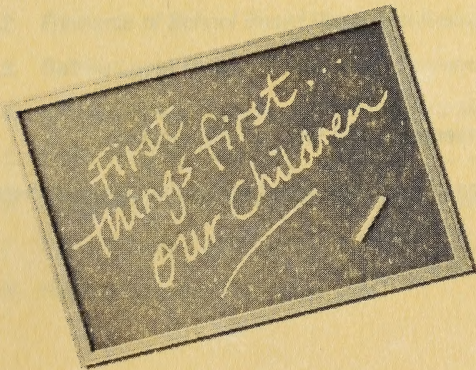


Guide

for

School Board Planning and Reporting

APRIL 1999



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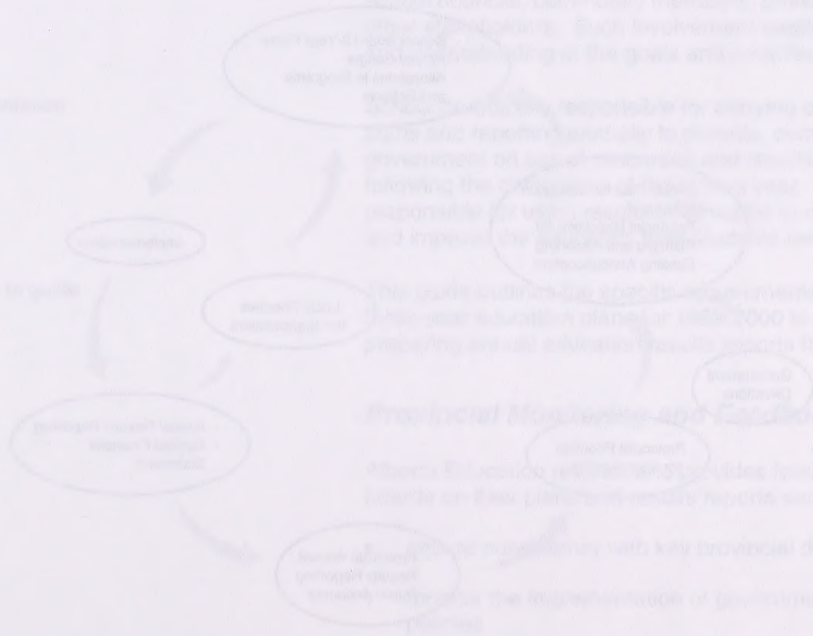
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OVERVIEW – ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION



Accountability in Education

Accountability defined

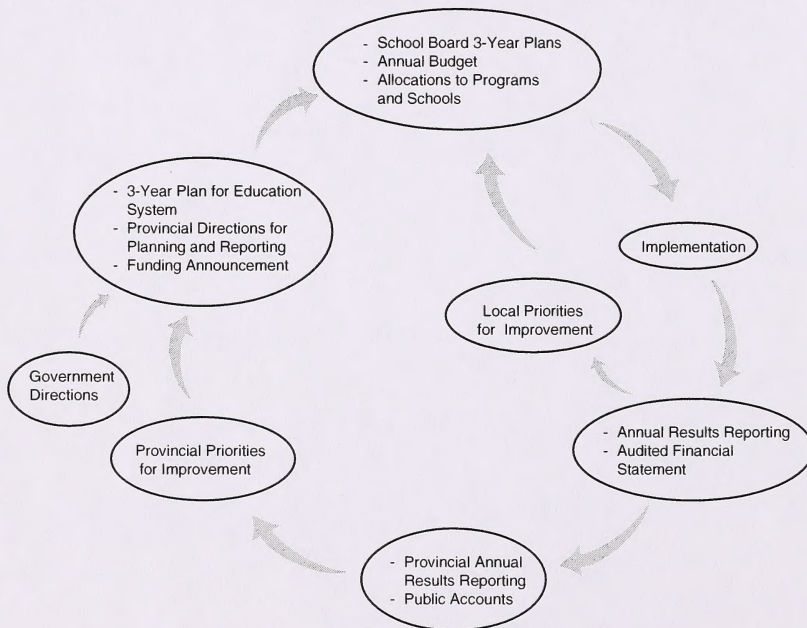
The provincial government adopted a comprehensive concept of accountability which expanded the focus from accounting for dollars spent to include accounting for results achieved. This type of accountability involves developing plans to make best use of resources available, assessing results to determine if expectations are being met, identifying where improvement is needed, and reporting the results to the public.

Authority and application

This expanded concept of accountability, applying to government departments and funded agencies and organizations, was established in legislation in 1995. The Government Accountability Act (GAA) requires government departments and school boards as well as other public agencies to prepare plans and report on results.

The accountability cycle for the education system (*Accountability in Education – Policy Framework*, June 1995) was developed to describe the application of government's comprehensive concept of accountability to the education system. This cycle focuses on continuous improvement and on the linkage of school board plans and reports to each other and to provincial directions for education.

Accountability Cycle for Continuous Improvement in Education



GUIDE FOR SCHOOL BOARD PLANNING AND REPORTING

Purpose of school board plans and reports

The provincial three-year plan for the education system is updated annually and the annual results report is prepared in accordance with the GAA. The provincial plan provides a framework for school board planning and reporting.

School board plans and results reports are essential elements of accountability and of continuous improvement in education. These documents assist boards in:

- improving education for students
- specifying student learning priorities
- guiding decision making and budgeting
- addressing provincial directions and local needs, and
- enhancing communication with parents and the public.

School board planning and reporting take place in the context of government's three-year plan for education and other provincial directions for Alberta's education system, as indicated in the School Authority Accountability Policy 2.1.1 (*Policies, Regulations and Forms Manual*, April 1997).

Preparing education plans and results reports provide boards opportunities to work with administrative and school staff, school councils, community members, professional groups and other stakeholders. Such involvement creates commitment to and understanding of the goals and priorities of the jurisdiction.

Implementation

School boards are responsible for carrying out their education plans and reporting annually to parents, communities and government on use of resources and results achieved following the completion of the school year. They are also responsible for using results information to update their plans and improve the education their students receive.

Purpose of guide

This guide outlines the specific requirements for school board three-year education plans for 1999/2000 to 2001/2002 and preparing annual education results reports for 1999 and 2000.

Provincial Monitoring and Feedback

Alberta Education reviews and provides feedback to school boards on their plans and results reports each year in order to:

- ensure consistency with key provincial directions
- monitor the implementation of government's accountability policies

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- strengthen the linkage between jurisdiction plans and results reports
- ensure communication of priorities, intended action and results achieved to parents and the public, and
- provide support for continuous improvement in school jurisdictions and schools.

School board implementation of school-level planning and reporting also is monitored.

Information from board plans and reports is considered in updating the provincial three-year plan and results report, and developing province-wide initiatives and policies for education.

SCHOOL BOARD THREE-YEAR EDUCATION PLANS

Preparing/Updating School Board Plans

Board responsibility

School boards are responsible for providing programs that enable their students to achieve the provincial student learning outcomes outlined in the *Definition of Basic Education* (Appendix 1, page 22) and the *Programs of Study*. The three-year education plans indicate what jurisdictions will be doing to meet that obligation. These plans identify the results boards plan to achieve for each goal, the measures that will be used to assess progress and the actions that will be carried out to achieve these results.

Link to the provincial three-year plan for education

Board plans are aligned with provincial direction by including a core set of goals, results, performance measures and priorities for improvement from the provincial three-year plan for education (see pages 8-11). Boards add their own unique priorities, goals, results, measures, and strategies to this core set.

Three-year timeframe

All school boards in Alberta currently have a three-year education plan in place. These plans maintain a three-year time frame and are updated annually. As one year is completed another is added, rolling the plan forward. Adjustments to the plan are made in response to recent performance and changes in the operating environment. It should not be necessary to prepare a completely new plan each year. Every few years the board should revisit and refresh the components of the plan that change little over time, e.g., vision, mission and beliefs.

Considerations and expectations

When updating their plans each year, school boards will need to consider:

- the information in their results report and in the provincial three-year plan and annual results report
- the feedback they receive from Alberta Education
- the concerns and suggestions from school councils, parents and the public, and
- the allocation of resources to achieve results outlined in the plan when developing their budget.

School boards are expected to:

- build on the provincial vision and mission for education

- adapt the provincially required goals and results to reflect the unique characteristics and circumstances of the jurisdiction
- reflect the Alberta Children's Initiative in updating their plan
- include other goals, results, performance measures, and strategies that reflect their local needs and circumstances, and
- consult with parents, staff, school councils, and community and business representatives in the development of their education plans.

Distribution and Communication

School board three-year education plans are public documents approved by the school board. The complete plan is to be on file and available for department monitoring and public review in the jurisdiction office and in schools. The key people responsible for implementing the plan – board staff, school staff and school councils – will need copies. The board is responsible for informing their community of the highlights of their plan, including priorities for improvement and budget summary.

Three-Year Plans are to be updated by May 31 each year.

The updated plans should be placed on the jurisdiction website and notify Alberta Education by May 31, either by e-mail to:

RONE@edc.gov.ab.ca

or by letter to:

Director
Regional Office and Native Education Branch
Alberta Education
3rd Floor West, Devonian Building
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2

School boards may wish to prepare detailed implementation plans for use within the jurisdiction. School board technology plans and school-level plans complement the school board plan. These are also to be available for department monitoring and public review in the jurisdiction office and schools.

Suggested Elements of School Board Three-Year Plans

A comprehensive, forward looking plan for a school jurisdiction typically includes:

- Vision
- Mission
- Principles and/or Beliefs
- Profile
- Issues and Trends
- Priority Areas for Improvement
- Goals
- Results for each goal
- Performance Measures for each result
- Targets for key performance measures
- Strategies for each goal
- Budget that supports the plan
- Information on Capital Projects

See Appendix 2 (pages 24-26) for definitions and explanations of these elements.

Provincial Requirements for School Board Plans, 1999/2000 to 2001/2002

Priorities for improvement

- Provincial priority areas for improvement:
 - improving secondary student achievement in mathematics
 - increasing high school completion rates
 - improving co-ordination of services for children (the Alberta Children's Initiative provides a framework to guide joint planning and service delivery to improve children's services)
 - improving access to information technology
 - improving public satisfaction with education
- Local priorities areas for improvement, based on results information.

GUIDE FOR SCHOOL BOARD PLANNING AND REPORTING

Provincial goals and related results

Education is focused on what students need to learn and students are achieving high standards.

- Students achieve provincial learning standards.
- Students acquire the education they need to prepare them for work, further studies and citizenship.

Education is responsive to students, parents and communities.

- Parents and students can choose schools and programs within the public education system.
- Parents, business and the community have meaningful roles in education.

Children in school have access to the support services they require.

- Services for children are coordinated at the jurisdiction and local levels.
- All schools are safe and caring.

Teaching in Alberta consistently is of high quality.

- Teachers' professional growth focuses on the knowledge, skills and attributes required to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.
- Teachers help students achieve provincial learning expectations and high standards.

Information technology is integrated into education to enhance student learning, and increase efficiency and flexibility of delivery.

- Students have information technology skills needed for K-12 learning, work and post-secondary studies.
- Information technology expands choice and flexibility in what, when, where and how students learn.
- Teachers are able to integrate information technology into instruction and the management of student learning.

GUIDE FOR SCHOOL BOARD PLANNING AND REPORTING

Provincial goals and related results
(cont'd)

The education system is open and accountable for the achievement of results and use of resources.

- Parents and the community have timely and meaningful information about education, including student achievement and expenditures, from the school board and its schools.

Strategies

Local strategies for:

- required provincial goals
- provincial priority areas for improvement (see page 9)
- local priorities for improvement
- any local goals

See Appendix 2, (page 26) for information on developing strategies.

Performance measures

Required performance measures (related to the result in the first provincial goal – students achieve provincial learning standards):

- Percentages of students who achieved the acceptable standard and percentages of students who achieved the standard of excellence on provincial achievement tests;
- Percentage of students who achieved the acceptable standard and the percentages who achieved the standard of excellence on diploma exams;
- Participation rate: percentages of students in grades 3, 6 and 9 who wrote provincial achievement tests and student participation in diploma exam courses;
- Local outcome measures for:
 - all other provincial and local results
 - provincial and local priority areas for improvement
 - the progress and achievement of specific groups of students – related to Provincial Initiatives: Early Literacy, ESL and accommodating students with special needs (mild, moderate, severe, gifted);

See Appendix 2 (pages 25-26) and Appendix 4 (page 31) for information on developing performance measures.

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- Targets to be achieved by the end of the plan period for student achievement for all provincial achievement tests and diploma examinations (see Appendix 3, pages 29-30, for information on local target setting).

Budget information

Budget Highlights (see Appendix 2, page 26).

Note: The above requirements for school board plans are the minimum mandated by the province. School boards are encouraged to develop strategic plans that contain all elements that are critical for improved performance and for staff and community understanding of jurisdiction priorities and directions.

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SCHOOL BOARD ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORTS

Preparing Annual Education Results Reports

The AERR tells us where we are in relation to where we want to be

The school board annual education results report (AERR) accounts to the public and government for the education of students and use of resources.

The AERR highlights progress, accomplishments and results achieved in the past year as a result of implementing the jurisdiction education plan. Analyzing and reporting on results achieved are critically important to the accountability cycle. The analysis shows where performance is strong and identifies areas needing improvement to be addressed in the annual update of the jurisdiction three-year plan.

Public reporting of performance

School boards must proactively provide information to the public on student achievement, provincial initiatives and priorities of improvement using the outcome measures identified in their three-year plan. Boards may choose format(s) for effective communication of this key information to their community, e.g., newspaper insert, brochure, etc. Boards also must make the complete AERR and Audited Financial Statement available to the public upon request.

A copy of the AERR must be placed on the jurisdiction website by **November 30** each year and notify Alberta Education by e-mail to:

RONE@edc.gov.ab.ca

or by letter to:

Director
Regional Office and Native Education Branch
Alberta Education
3rd Floor West, Devonian Building
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L2

Suggested Elements of Annual Education Results Reports

A comprehensive annual report on progress and results typically contains:

- Contextual Information
- Progress and Accomplishments
- Outcomes achieved using performance measures identified in the jurisdiction three-year plan, including overall assessment of results

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- Future Challenges, including priorities for improvement based on results information
- Financial Summary

See Appendix 2, pages 26-28 for definitions and explanations of these elements.

Provincial Requirements for November 2000 AERR

Reporting requirements

- Information on Performance Measures, including:
 - Percentages of students who achieved the acceptable standard and percentages of students who achieved the standard of excellence on provincial achievement tests (five years of results) based on both those writing and the cohort (total enrolment in grade);
 - Percentages of students who achieved the acceptable standard and the percentages who achieved the standard of excellence on diploma exams (five years of results);
 - Participation rates: percentages of students in grades 3, 6 or 9 who wrote provincial achievement tests and student participation in diploma exam courses;

Notes:

- For the above three measures on student achievement and participation, the Student Evaluation Branch provides multi-year reports by school and school jurisdiction.
- The provincial achievement standards for achievement tests and diploma examinations: 85% of students are expected to achieve the acceptable standard and 15% of students are expected to achieve the standard of excellence.
- Percentages of students who achieved the jurisdiction target on provincial achievement tests and diploma examinations;
- Reporting on local outcome measures for provincial priority areas for improvement;

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- Reporting on local outcome measures on the progress and achievement of specific groups of students – related to Provincial Initiatives: Early Literacy, ESL and accommodating students with special needs (mild, moderate, severe, gifted);
- Reporting local outcomes measures for all results in the jurisdiction plan;
- Three to five years of trend data for all measures, if available, including latest available survey information.
- Financial Summary, including total spending per student, operational spending per student and information on where and how to obtain detailed expenditure information.

For consistent reporting of per-student spending across school jurisdictions:

- Calculate total spending per student by dividing total expenditures for the year (AFS Schedule 1) by total FTE enrolment. Calculate FTE enrolment by adding September 30 actuals (BR Schedule 10) total enrolled students grades 1-12 (column 8) and FTE enrolment in ECS (column 12).
- Calculate operational spending per student using AFS Schedule 1; divide total expenses for the year minus amortization of capital assets and interest on capital debt by total FTE enrolment. (See above for explanation of calculating FTE enrolment.)

Notes: The above reporting requirements are the minimum mandated by the province. School boards are encouraged to:

- report on key aspects of education that are important to parents and the public in their communities, e.g., parent and public satisfaction with education, safe and caring schools, and
- to provide information to foster understanding of the results, e.g., contextual information, what's working well, what needs improvement.

See Appendix 6, pages 33 and 34, for the reporting requirements for the November 1999 AERR.

SCHOOL THREE-YEAR EDUCATION PLANS AND ANNUAL RESULTS REPORTS

School Planning and Reporting

Authority for school planning and reporting requirement

The provincial requirements for school education plans and results reports were initially outlined in the *Accountability in Education: Policy Framework* released by the Minister of Education in June 1995.

Purpose of school planning and reporting

School planning and reporting to the public, consistent with school board and provincial directions, ensure that the entire education system focuses on key improvements and the educational needs of students.

School planning, budgeting, assessing, and reporting are integral components of school board planning and school-based decision making. School boards are monitored for implementation of school planning and reporting in their jurisdiction.

Provincial Requirements for School Plans

School plans are to be updated annually and include:

- Three provincial goals and relevant local strategies:
 - high learning standards and quality programs (Goal 1);
 - responsiveness to students, parents and communities (Goal 2); and
 - public accountability (Goal 7).
- Performance measures listed below.
- Additional goals, strategies, results and performance measures to reflect local needs and the advice of the school council.
- Targets for achievement tests and diploma exams (see page 11, Appendix 2, page 26, and Appendix 3, pages 29-30).

Note: The items listed above are a minimum set of requirements for school plans mandated by the province. Schools are encouraged to include in their plans all the elements of a comprehensive education plan (see page 8). School boards are expected to designate additional planning requirements for their schools.

Provincial Requirements for School Annual Results Reports

Schools are to report annually to the public on student achievement and use of resources. Information on the following performance measures must be included:

Required performance measures

- **(Revised)** Five years of achievement test and diploma examination results based on those writing in relation to local targets and provincial standards (see page 14 and Appendix 2, page 27 for information on provincial standards).
- Percentages of students in grades 3, 6 and 9 who wrote provincial achievement tests and student participation in diploma examinations.

Note: The above reporting requirements constitute the minimum set mandated by the province. School boards are expected to designate additional reporting requirements for their schools, and schools are encouraged to report on key aspects of education that are important to parents and the public in their community, e.g., parent and public satisfaction with education, safe and caring schools.

School Board Responsibilities

- Developing policies and processes for school planning and reporting (including target setting) to provide for continuous improvement of results at the school level.
- Determining content requirements additional to those designated for schools by the province.
- Determining the formats, processes, school involvement in jurisdiction target-setting and use of school annual education plans and results reports (see Appendix 3, pages 29-30, for information on local target setting).
- Establishing policies to address the frequency of school surveys and their alignment with surveys conducted by the school board.
- Determining the dates for completion of school plans and reports consistent with their own planning and reporting cycle.
- Providing their schools and school councils with the jurisdiction three-year plan and AERR.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Basic Education in Alberta – The Definition **(Ministerial Order No. 004/98)**

A basic education must provide students with a solid core program including language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Students will be able to meet the provincial graduation requirements and be prepared for entry into the workplace or post-secondary studies. Students will understand personal and community values and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Students will develop the capacity to pursue learning throughout their lives. Students also should have opportunities to learn languages other than English and to attain levels of proficiency and cultural awareness which will help to prepare them for participation in the global economy.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare them for life after high school. A basic education will allow students to:

- Read for information, understanding and enjoyment.
- Write and speak clearly, accurately and appropriately for the context.
- Use mathematics to solve problems in business, science and daily-life situations.
- Understand the physical world, ecology and the diversity of life.
- Understand the scientific method, the nature of science and technology, and their application to daily life.
- Know the history and geography of Canada and have a general understanding of world history and geography.
- Understand Canada's political, social, and economic systems within a global context.
- Respect the cultural diversity and common values of Canada.
- Demonstrate desirable personal characteristics such as respect, responsibility, fairness, honesty, caring, loyalty, and commitment to democratic ideals.
- Recognize the importance of personal well-being and appreciate how family and others contribute to that well-being.
- Know the basic requirements of an active, healthful lifestyle.
- Understand and appreciate literature, the arts and the creative process.
- Research an issue thoroughly and evaluate the credibility and reliability of information sources.
- Demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills in problem solving and decision making.
- Demonstrate competence in using information technologies.
- Know how to learn and work independently and as part of a team.
- Manage time and other resources needed to complete a task.
- Demonstrate initiative, leadership, flexibility, and persistence.
- Evaluate their own endeavours and continually strive to improve.
- Have the desire and realize the need for life-long learning.

Standards for Student Learning

The Minister of Education defines acceptable standards and standards of excellence for student achievement in consultation with Albertans. Employers are involved in specifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in the workplace. Schools, school authorities and the Minister of Education assess and report regularly to the public on a range of student learning.

The school's primary responsibility is to ensure that students meet or exceed the provincial standards as reflected in the Student Learning Outcomes (outlined above), the Alberta Programs of Study, provincial achievement tests, diploma examinations and graduation requirements.

Education Delivery

Schools must engage students in a variety of activities that enable them to acquire the expected learnings. Schools have authority to deploy resources and may use any instructional technique acceptable to the community as long as the standards are achieved. Schools, teachers and students are encouraged to take advantage of various delivery options including the use of technology, distance learning and the workplace.

Schools play a supportive role to families and the community in helping students develop desirable personal characteristics and the ability to make ethical decisions. Schools also help students take increasing responsibility for their learning and behaviour, develop a sense of community belonging and acquire a clearer understanding of community values and how these relate to personal values.

Students learn basic, transferable knowledge, skills and attitudes in school. Schools, in co-operation with employers, provide opportunities for students to develop and practice employability skills. The Minister of Education provides credit for off-campus learning that is approved and accepted by the school and the employer. Government works with schools, employers and post-secondary institutions to help young people make a smooth transition to work and further study.

APPENDIX 2

Elements of School Board Plans and Results Reports – Definitions and Explanations

The elements of the school board three-year education plan, listed below, are inter-related. The school board uses information about what and where a school board is (mission, beliefs, profile, issues and trends, current performance levels) to help determine where the school board would like to be (vision, goals, results), how achievement of results will be assessed (performance measures and targets), and what actions will be taken (strategies) and how resources will be allocated (budget) to achieve the desired goals.

Elements of school board plans:

Vision

A vision statement is an ideal to strive for, sometimes called a preferred future. It looks to the future and describes the fundamental characteristics of education, e.g., describes where the school board wants to be, what its students will have achieved, and what its services and programs for students will look like over the longer term.

- School authority vision statements must be consistent with the provincial vision for education:

“Alberta’s young people are the best educated in the country, able to achieve their individual potential, create a positive future for themselves, their families and their communities, and contribute to Alberta’s prosperity and superior quality of life.”

Mission

A clear, concise statement of an organization’s overall purpose and role.

- The mission statement gives focus to all the programs and services a school board provides for students.

- School authority mission statements must be consistent with the provincial mission for the education system:

“To ensure that all Alberta students have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society.”

Principles and/or Beliefs

Statements that reflect the values of the school board and what it stands for.

- Principles and beliefs serve to guide all decision making and provide a foundation for the development of the mission, vision, and goals.
- School board principles/beliefs must be consistent with the principles for the provincial education system: access to quality education, equity, flexibility, responsiveness and accountability.

Profile

A brief description of the jurisdiction that overviews its characteristics, e.g., the students and the community it serves, the programs provided, the location.

- Briefly describes the context in which education takes place in the school jurisdiction.
- Alberta Education has posted jurisdiction profile information on Ednet that jurisdictions can use in preparing/updating the profile in their three-year plan (<http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/department/>)

Issues and Trends

An issue is an existing or emerging condition which, if left unaddressed, could interfere with ability to fulfill a mandate or achieve goals.

Note: Definitions • = Explanation/Advice

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Trends are directions of data established over time that may show increases, decreases, or no change, e.g., enrolments over time, student achievement over time.

- At least 3 to 5 years of data is necessary to show a trend.
- Issues and trends help to identify opportunities and challenges facing the school jurisdiction that need to be taken into account in planning, budgeting, assessing progress and reporting.

Priority Areas for Improvement (Required)

Important outcomes for education where performance does not meet expectations.

- Provincial priority areas are identified from performance measures information (see page 8). Both the department and school jurisdictions address these in their plans.
- School jurisdictions identify and address local priorities for improvement based on their results.

Goals (Required)

Broad statement of desired conditions or aims to work toward over the long term in order to realize an organization's vision and to fulfill its responsibilities.

- Goals are developed by the province to establish direction for the education system overall and change little over time.
- Required goals (see pages 9-10) may be restated to reflect the school board perspective; rewording of a required goal should retain its original intent.

- Other goals to address local needs and circumstances, as determined by the school board and its community, may be included in the plan.

Results (Required)

Measurable outcomes to be achieved that answer the question, "What will this look like when we get to where we want to be?"

- Expressions of intended or desired outcome, e.g., "students achieve...", "teachers use...", not to be confused with performance measures (see below).
- Required results (see pages 9-10) may be restated to reflect local needs and conditions; rewording of a required result should retain its original intent.
- Boards must include at least one result for each local goal.
- For provincially required goals, boards may develop results additional to those that are required.
- Each result needs a corresponding performance measure (see below); however, one performance measure may provide data for more than one result.

Performance Measures (Required)

Performance measures indicate what data will be collected to assess and report on achievement of results.

- Performance measures are expressed in quantifiable terms, e.g., "number of...", "percentage of...".
- Performance measures for results in the provincial three-year plan for education may be used or adapted for school board plans.
- See Appendix 4, page 31, for more information about developing performance measures.

Note: Definitions • = Explanation/Advice

APPENDIX 2

Targets (Required for provincial achievement tests and diploma exams)

A desired level of performance to be attained by a certain time and can involve some increment of improvement over the current state.

- Targets are a strategic tool to help school boards focus on maintaining or improving outcomes. They may be most valuable as indicators of desired performance for the board's priorities.
- Targets are usually expressed in quantitative terms, and can indicate a range, e.g., by "2002, 80 to 90 per cent of students ...".
- Recent performance is used to set the targets to be achieved by the end of the next three-year plan.
- School authority targets should be set in consultation with schools, parents and the community. (See Appendix 3, pages 29-30, for more information on local target setting.)

Strategies (Required)

Actions taken in the short to medium term (1 to 5 years) designed to achieve goals and desired results.

- Strategies are expressed in action-oriented terms, e.g., "develop...", "implement...", "assist...", "work with...".
- Strategies are developed by the school board to address priorities, improvement areas, learning needs of specific groups of students, and local issues, trends and opportunities.
- Provincial strategies from government's three-year plan for education can be adapted to reflect the school board perspective.
- Strategies do not need a corresponding performance measure.

Budget Highlights (Required)

Key budget information from jurisdiction's Budget Report.

- The board's budget reflects and supports the plan. Budget information included in the plan should:
 - highlight allocations to major spending categories (i.e. instruction, administration, operations and maintenance, and capital);
 - communicate easily to parents and the public (e.g., using bar or pie graphs).

Capital Projects and Priorities

Briefly describes board's capital priorities and status of capital projects.

- Highlights jurisdiction's capital priorities for modernizations, additions, new schools, etc., including projects planned, approved, and underway.
- Communicates easily to parents and public.

Elements of school board annual education results reports (AERRs)

Contextual Information

Briefly explains the environment in which results were achieved.

- Contextual information identifies the issues, trends, (e.g., student and community characteristics) and circumstances affecting results achieved.
- Does not have to be a separate section; contextual information can be integrated throughout the report.

Note: Definitions • = Explanation/Advice

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Progress and Accomplishments

Briefly describes board's progress in implementing its three-year plan.

- Progress and accomplishments highlight the accomplishments of the board/ jurisdiction over the past school year, e.g., progress on or completion of major capital projects, implementing a new program or policy, focus of teacher in-service.

Performance Measures Information (Required)

Reports performance measure information related to results in each goal of the board's three-year plan.

- Reports progress toward achievement of local targets for provincial achievement tests and diploma exams and for other performance measures where jurisdiction targets have been set.
- Provide five years of student results and compares local results with the provincial standards for student achievement on provincial assessments (achievement tests, diploma examinations).

Note: Provincial standard: 85% of students are expected to achieve the acceptable standard and 15% of students are expected to achieve the standard of excellence.

- For the measures, three to five years of trend data measures should be reported, if available, including the latest available survey information.
- See Appendix 5, page 32 for information on conducting surveys.

- Any deletions or substitutions of local measures in results reporting need to be noted and briefly explained.
- Note: Boards may find that a selected measure is not meaningful or the data is too costly or difficult to gather. Boards can drop or replace such a measure in the next plan and indicate this in their AERR. If a better measure has already been developed and information is available, this can be included in the AERR instead.

Evaluation of Results

Assesses performance measures information.

- Briefly reports overall evaluation or assessment of progress based on performance measure information, e.g, results are satisfactory, exceed expectations or need improvement.
- Typically is a concise summary paragraph for each goal and improvement area.

Future Challenges

Briefly describes major issues, concerns and priorities for the board over the next few years.

- Identifies continuing and new improvement areas arising from the performance measures information which will be addressed in the update of jurisdiction's plan.
- Indicates emerging issues and trends facing the jurisdiction that need to be addressed.
- See pages 44-45 in the *Fourth Annual Results Report on Education, 1998*, for an example of Future Challenges.

Note: Definitions • = Explanation/Advice

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Financial Summary (Required)

Summarizes school board spending for the previous school year based on the Audited Financial Statement.

- Information should be concise and easily understood by parents and the public; this can be in graph or table form (e.g., the pie diagram in the provincial three-year plan for education).
- Includes total spending per student per year and operational spending per student per year.
- Indicates where and how detailed budget and expenditure information may be obtained.

Note: Definitions • = Explanation/Advice

Setting Local Targets for Student Achievement

Targets and Planning

A target is a desired level of measured performance to be attained by a specified time. Targets are an implicit part of any goal. While a school's or school authority's educational goals point out the directions for people's efforts, targets describe in specific terms what will be accomplished by a certain time. This allows people to assess whether they are heading where they intended to go, and how well they are moving toward their desired outcomes. Assessment of progress in relation to a target may also lead to the recognition that a different target would be more helpful in guiding your school's or school authority's efforts toward a particular goal. By identifying immediate, reachable outcomes, targets encourage teachers, students, administrators, and their community to believe that distant goals are attainable.

Viewed in this way, targets can be a valuable part of your school or school authority plan. Your mission, mandate, values and beliefs, and long-range goals all provide a context for setting specific targets. Similarly, past accomplishments are helpful indicators of what specific targets may be most appropriate. This is why achievement test and diploma examination results, as well as results of various other local assessments, are relevant in target setting.

Local Focus

Targets for student achievement on the provincial achievement tests and diploma examinations are a required part of school and school authority education plans. Targets for school authorities provide a framework for each school in the jurisdiction to use in setting targets. District targets will be most helpful if they take into account the variations in overall student achievement from school to school.

Systematic interpretation of school results from provincial achievement tests and diploma examinations will reveal where students need more help in order to continue learning successfully. This can be the beginning point for setting district and school targets for student performance on the tests for the next year or two. The provincial expectation, that at least 85 per cent of students will achieve the acceptable standard on each test or examination, indicates the long-term goal. It is appropriate for school authorities to set targets that are different from provincial standards. Staff in each school will be able to identify what percentage of their students reasonably can be expected to achieve the provincial standard in a particular test or examination within the time specified in the targets. An important part of this decision is agreeing on how resources and people can support the priorities that have been set locally.

Tips for Setting Local Targets

- Consider past and desired participation rates in achievement tests and diploma examinations.
- Focus on a limited number of areas. For example, emphasize one or two subjects in which weaknesses in student performance are across grades. It may be reasonable to set "hold the line" targets in other areas temporarily.
- Set targets in relation to other targets. It is important to ensure that achievement of one target does not jeopardize the achievement of another. For example, student participation rates for achievement tests and diploma examinations should not decrease because of a desire to improve school or authority results.
- Work collaboratively across grades in a school. Students' performance on an achievement test or diploma examination reflects their learning over the years. Teachers in all grades can contribute important insights and assistance in setting targets.

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- Use the school reports on achievement test or diploma examination results to identify what aspects of a subject or course need attention, and use this information to plan targets.
 - Emphasize what students need, in order to succeed, rather than focusing on problems that keep students from achieving at the levels expected provincially.
 - Expect to set different targets in different grades and subjects/courses, depending on past results and current priorities and resources.
 - Work collaboratively at the jurisdiction level, to identify areas of common strength or weakness across different schools and to determine targets for the district that can encourage all schools.
 - Interpret targets to students and parents so that they are part of the school-wide effort to achieve targets.
 - Report to students and parents on student achievement in relation to targets.
- Through its targets, each school authority or school, together with parents and members of the community, can highlight priorities that exist locally for a given year and commit to achieving certain results. Insofar as target setting complements other strategies for improving student learning, your targets are likely to contribute to student learning and to the overall effectiveness of schooling in your community.

Targets in Perspective

Provincial tests, though providing a common standard and important information about students' learning, are only one of many indicators that must be used to evaluate the effectiveness of schools and school authorities. School authorities and individual schools may find it helpful to set targets related to other measures of student achievement, and to areas other than student achievement. Examples include completion of programs, satisfaction reported by students or parents, collaboration of parents or others from the community, student involvement in the community, and other types of indicators reflecting local education goals.

Advice on School Authority Performance Measurement in Alberta

Background

Performance measurement is a challenging and critically important aspect of implementing the Accountability Framework for continuous improvement in Alberta's education system.

School authorities are required to list in their three-year plans the performance measures they will report on in their annual education results reports. Performance measures ensure a focus on outcomes so that:

- those involved in education have information on results achieved to use to improve education;
- parents and the public have information on results achieved with the investment of resources in education.

Purpose of Performance Measures

Selecting appropriate performance measures is key to obtaining useful information and making improvements in education. School authorities develop and use performance measures to:

- assess and report annually on achievement of results to parents, the public and government;
- identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement; and
- assist in decision making such as selecting priorities, developing improvement plans, allocating resources, setting improvement targets, and implementing initiatives and programs.

Tips about Performance Measures

Limit the number of measures for each result and focus on obtaining useful information. "It's impossible to measure everything, and as important as measuring results is, it cannot become such a large and expensive task that we lose sight of the objective." (Government of Alberta, *Measuring Up*, 1996).

- Develop a set of measures that balances student, financial, satisfaction, and other performance information.
- Differentiate between a result and a measure. A result is a specific outcome of achieving a goal. A measure helps to assess whether the result is being achieved. For example, if the result is improved secondary student achievement in specific subjects, a possible measure might be "the percentage of junior and senior high teachers who teach in their areas of specialization."
- Select measures that provide quantitative information - e.g., "the percentage of teachers who use computers or Internet resources in the classroom" instead of "integration of computers and Internet into the classroom."
- Report performance in relation to a total number. Measures that are in the form of a ratio (percentages or rates) provide an important context for assessing performance e.g., "the number of students who participate in school-sponsored extra-curricular activities" is more meaningful with the addition of "out of the total number of students" or stated as "the percentage of students who participate in"
- Identify measures that can be assessed at regular intervals to provide comparable trend data over time.
- Select measures and develop data definitions carefully so they will be appropriate over the longer term. Changing measures or data definitions interrupts trend lines.
- Develop appropriate questions for satisfaction measures to obtain useful information. Questions on the same topic often need to be worded slightly differently for each respondent group. For example, high school students might be asked, "Are you satisfied with the range of courses and programs available in your school?" and parents might be asked "Are you satisfied with the choice of courses and programs for your child?"

Examples of school board performance measures are available on Ednet (<http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/measurebank97/mbank97.htm>).

Conducting Surveys

Some local measures may require surveys of parents, students, staff and other community members.

To be manageable, surveys can be done on a random sampling basis or rotated among schools or stakeholder groups over a three-year period.

If boards use the same questions as are used in Alberta Education's annual surveys of a stratified random sample of parents, students and the public, local results can be considered in relation to provincial results. The questions asked in Alberta Education's 1999 survey of students, parents and the public are available the internet at (<http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/>).

While surveys do not have to be done annually, the latest available survey information should be reported in the AERR each year along with trend data (information on the same questions from surveys done in previous years), if available.

Two resources were prepared for Alberta Education in 1995 to help school jurisdictions conduct satisfaction surveys:

- Environics West, *Pilot Project Report*: This report compares two methods of conducting surveys of parents, teachers and students: telephone interviews and mailed, self-administered questionnaires (<http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/>).
- Environics West, *Telephone and Self-Completed Satisfaction Surveys: Training Manual*: This manual provides advice on selecting samples and conducting telephone and mailed surveys (<http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/>).

The Alberta Auditor General's Office also has prepared a resource on conducting surveys for the Alberta public sector: *Client Satisfaction Surveys*, October 1998. This document is available on the internet (http://www.oag.ab.ca/pdf/client_satisfaction.pdf).

APPENDIX 6

Reporting Requirements for November 1999 AERR

Required Elements

- Statement of Responsibility
- Contextual information
- Progress and Accomplishments:
 - Highlights board's accomplishments over the year just completed (1998/1999).
 - Highlights progress made on provincial initiatives (e.g., Early Literacy, ESL, special needs) and provincial and local priority areas for improvement during 1998/1999.
- Results achieved on provincial and local goals:
 - Assesses overall progress in each goal area.
 - Reports information on required (see next column) and local performance measures listed in the school board plan for 1998/1999 to 2000/2001 (June 1998) for each goal.
 - Notes any changes in measures between the June 1998 plan and information reported in November 1998.
 - Identifies continuing and new improvement areas from performance measure information to be addressed in the next plan update.
- Financial Summary:
 - Provides an easily understood spending summary for the school year just completed based on the AFS.
 - Indicates where and how detailed budget and expenditure information may be obtained.

Required Performance Measures

Goal: Education is focused on what students need to learn and students achieve high standards.

- **(Revised)** Percentages of students who achieved the acceptable standard and percentages of students who achieved the standard of excellence on provincial achievement tests (five years of results) based both on those writing and the cohort (total enrolment in grade).
- Percentages of students who achieved the acceptable standard and the percentages who achieved the standard of excellence on diploma exams (five years of results).
- Percentages of students who achieved jurisdiction targets on provincial achievement tests and diploma exams.
- Participation rates: percentages of students enrolled in grades 3, 6 or 9 who wrote provincial achievement tests and student participation in diploma exam courses.

Notes:

- For the above three measures on student achievement and participation, the Student Evaluation Branch provides multi-year reports by school and school jurisdiction.
- The provincial achievement standards for achievement tests and diploma examinations: 85% of students are expected to achieve the acceptable standard and 15% of students are expected to achieve the standard of excellence.
- **(Revised)** Reporting school completion is not required.
- Percentage of parents who are satisfied with the quality of education.

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- Percentages of students who are satisfied with:
 - their school overall
 - variety in classroom and school activities
 - challenge in classroom and school activities.
 - **(Revised)** Reporting on the percentages of students in Early Literacy and English as a Second Language programs reading and writing at grade level is not required.
- Goal: Education in Alberta is responsive to students, parents and communities.
- Percentage of parents satisfied with their opportunities for involvement in decisions affecting education in their child's school.
- Goal: Students have access to the support services they require.
- Percentage of parents of students with special needs (mild, moderate, severe) satisfied with:
 - access to services for child with special needs
 - progress and achievement of their child with special needs.
- Goal: Teaching in Alberta consistently is of high quality.
- Report on locally developed measures included in the June 1998 plan for this goal.
- Goal: Information technology is integrated into education to enhance student learning, and increase efficiency and flexibility of delivery.
- Percentage of students satisfied that they have the skills to use information technology.
- Goal: The education system is open and accountable for the achievement of results and use of resources.
- Percentage of parents who are satisfied with their access to and the quality of school information about their children's progress and achievement.
 - Percentage of school jurisdiction spending on instruction and percentage of school jurisdiction spending on administration.
- Notes:
- To calculate instructional spending percentage, divide the sum of AFS 1-12 spending, home education and ECS spending by total spending.
 - For reporting purposes, administration is defined as board governance and system administration; divide the sum of the amounts spent on these categories by total spending from the AFS to determine the percentage.
- Spending per student per school year.
- Note:
- For consistent reporting of per-student spending across school jurisdictions, divide total expenditures for the year (AFS Schedule 1) by total FTE enrolment. Calculate FTE enrolment by adding September 30 actuals (BR Schedule 10) total enrolled students grades 1-12 (column 8) and FTE enrolment in ECS (column 12).

APPENDIX 7

List of Source Documents

- *Accountability in Education: Policy Framework* (June 1995)
- *Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual* (April 1997)
- *Fourth Annual Results Report on Education 1998*
- *The Government of Alberta's Three-Year Plan for Education, 1999/2000 to 2001/2002* (1999)
- *Pilot Project Report*, Environics West (1995)
- *Telephone and Self-Completed Satisfaction Surveys: Training Manual*, Environics West (1995)

Internet: <http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/departement/>
Available from the Planning Branch,
Alberta Education
Phone: (780) 427-8217*
Fax: (780) 422-5255

- Audited Financial Statements (AFS) and Guidelines
- Budget Report (BR) and Guidelines, 1999/2000

Available from the School Business and
Legislative Services Branch, Alberta Education
Phone: (780) 427-7235*
Fax: (780) 427-5930

- *The Alberta Children's Initiative: An Agenda for Joint Action* (November 1998)

Available from the Special Education Branch,
Alberta Education
Phone: (780) 422-6326*
Fax: (780) 422-2039

- *Funding Manual for School Authorities in the 1999/2000 School Year* (1999)

Internet: <http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/funding>
Available from the School Finance Branch,
Alberta Education
Phone: (780) 427-2055*
Fax: (780) 427-2147

- *Government Accountability Act* (Statutes of Alberta, 1995, Chapter G-5.5)
- *School Act*, (Statutes of Alberta, 1988, Chapter S-3.1, as amended)

Available from the Queen's Printer Bookstore:
Edmonton Phone: (780) 427-4952*
Fax: (780) 452-0668
in Calgary Phone: (403) 297-6251*
Fax: (403) 297-8450

- *Government Accountability* (October 1994)
- *Client Satisfaction Surveys* (October, 1998)

Available from the Auditor General's Office
Phone: (780) 427-4222*
Fax: (780) 422-9555

- *Guidelines for Interpreting and Using the Results of the Diploma Examinations*, August 1998
- *Guidelines for Interpreting and Using the Results of the 1998 Achievement Tests*

Internet: <http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/departement/>
Updated annually and provided with school and
jurisdiction reports; also available from the
Student Evaluation Branch, Alberta Education
Phone: (780) 427-0010*
Fax: (780) 422-4200

- Management Information Reporting Schedules

Available from Regional Office and Native
Education Branch,
Alberta Education
Phone: (780) 427-2952*
Fax: (780) 422-9682

- *School Capital Manual*, May 1997

Available from the School Facilities Branch,
Alberta Education
Phone: (780) 427-2973*
Fax: (780) 427-5816

- * To be connected toll-free from outside
Edmonton and Calgary, dial 310-0000.

Feedback Form / Comments

Please tell us what you think about the planning and reporting process and the *Guide for School Board Planning and Reporting*. Comments will be used to improve the planning and reporting process and future information provided to school boards on plans and reports.

1. Planning and Reporting Process

- a) What concerns do you have about the planning and reporting process?

- b) How can the planning and reporting process be improved?

2. *Guide for School Board Planning and Reporting*

- a) What did you find helpful about the Guide?

- b) What concerns do you have about the Guide?

- c) What changes would you suggest for the Guide?

Please send your comments by mail, e-mail or fax to:

Planning Branch, Alberta Education

11160 Jasper Avenue

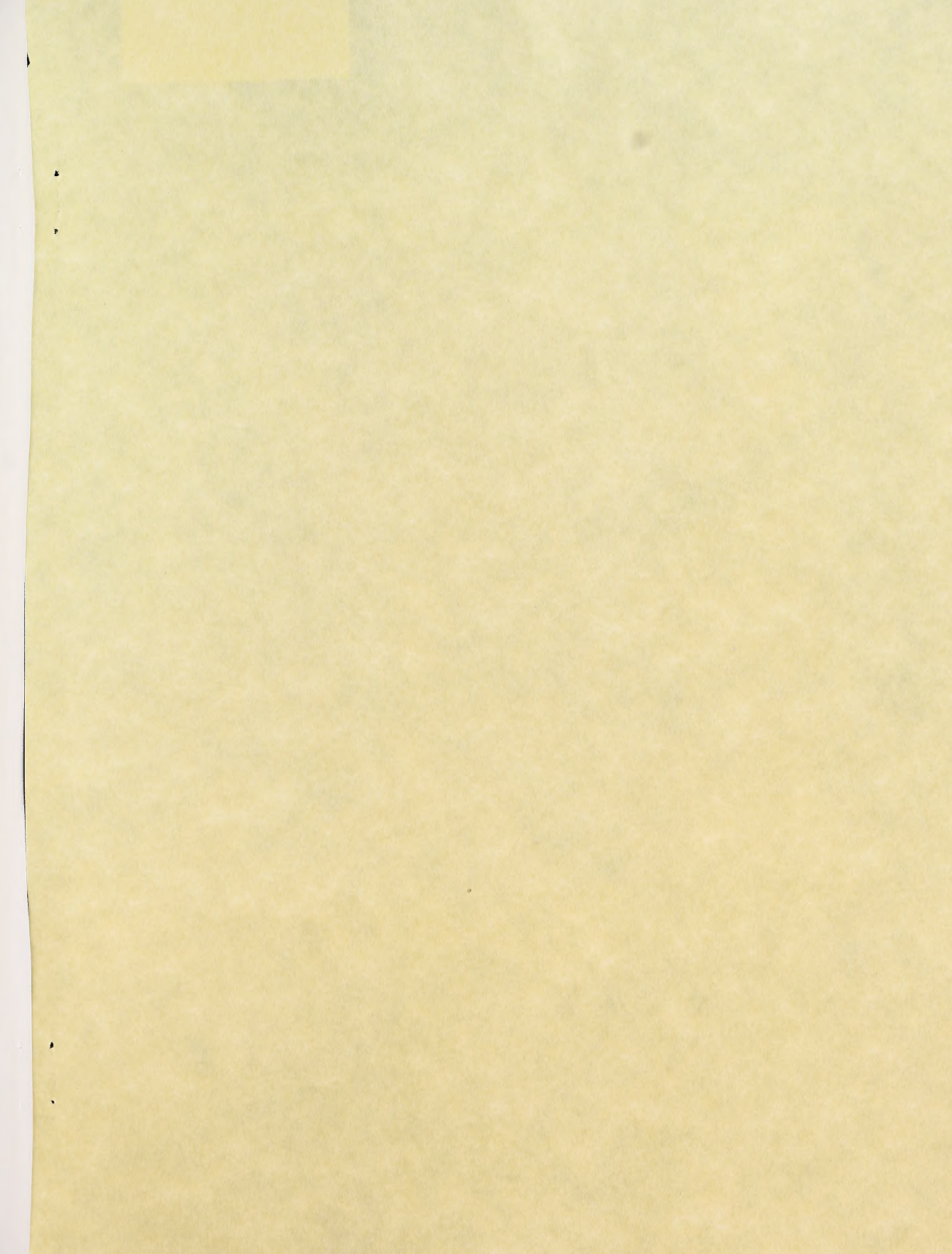
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